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THE END OF DIALECTICS

ALL, PHILOFICTION DIALECTICS, HEGEL, LARUELLE, LARUELLE#, NON MARXISM

A continuous insistence on the illusion of being able to think the problem of the relation between theory and practice in the terms of an original disjunction and a possible synthesis can be observed in philosophy (the differential positions remain, but both are constantly passed through or synthesized). The monistic-plural thinking of a Laruelle, on the other hand – thinking not of the One, but in the One – seeks precisely to no longer configure the apparently opposed pair of theory and practice in terms of disjunction and synthesis, but to reconstruct them in the last instance through the axiomatic demand of their identity. Theory and practice are superposed in a milieu of interference, a milieu made possible by the algebraic property of idempotence, a specific fusion of terms. The problem with philosophy, for Laruelle, is simply that it insists on a rather insidious non-coincidence of theory and

practice. (Gangle 2014: 45/Laruelle 2013a: 115) Non-philosophy attempts to avoid this aporia, but not by means of a rash action of synthesizing the performative and constitutive or descriptive aspects of practical discourse, but by radically suspending synthesis in order to initiate itself a specifically axiomatic procedure of term definition that defines its own practical methods and the syntactic operators that follow it: Determination-in-the-Last-Instance (DLI), Seeing-in-One, Dualysis, Cloning, and the non-philosophical Generic. The rigor of non-philosophical thinking of the immanence of the One serves to create a discourse that should lead toward the “oraxiom” in which the philosophical distinction between the theoretical and practical aspects of thought, between the performative and the constative functions of language, is no longer operative.² (Laruelle 2012: 51f.)

Laruelle makes a radical distinction between the Greek theorism of philosophy and the non-philosophical force of theory, which corresponds more to an unlearned knowledge or seeing-in-one. (Laruelle 2013e: 57) Philosophy’s addictive agonism, which is often enough almost indistinguishable from its agony, is replaced by a specific theoretical practice, which for Laruelle is that of unilateral duality. The non-philosophical theory and practice are thought *sui generis* in-One, or as identical in the last instance (that is, under the aspect that they are related to the Real). It is, as we shall see, Laruelle’s particular use of the axiomatic method to break with the philosophical logic of exchange, reversibility, and circularity between concept and reality.³ It would be necessary, therefore, to first clarify with Laruelle such seemingly obscure axioms as in-One, in-the-last-instance, in-the-last-identity, -without-, the lived-without-life. Laruelle also calls these axioms or syntactic operators axiomatized abstractions, or in other words, they constitute essential elements of the general formalization of first names.

But let us first return to what Laruelle calls “the principle of sufficiency philosophy,” the general coincidence and interaction between theory and practice that endlessly guarantees the sufficiency of philosophy so that it can articulate itself again and again in a saturated way, saying what it does when it says what it says. (Cf. for the following account: Gangle 2014: 48f.)

In the mathematical category theory (metatheory of structure and its relations and constellations) and the figures of the arrow and the figure, one can find the first clues for the representation of the philosophical relation “practice and theory”, in which the conceptual worlds, the semantic registers of philosophy and its practices are included. Category theory is considered the general mathematical theory for explicating the structures/systems of relations – categories –; a theory in which objects are determined solely on the basis of the relations they enter into with other objects of the same abstract kind. These relations can be represented as graphs (set of points representing an object) and the arrows between them (morphisms between one point and the other). However, certain conditions must be met for this to work: All arrows (“head to tail” method) must be able to be combined according to a uniform and determinate way. If there is a morphism (the morphism determines the object) from A to B, and another from B to C, then there is necessarily a morphism/arrow from A to C that connects the two mappings (transitivity). This combining arrow from A to C that passes through B glues or sutures the two arrows together by transforming the discrete functions into the continuity of One. (Cf. Gangle 2015)

Robert Brandom, to whom Rocco Gangle refers here (Gangle 2014: 49), used category theory to create a diagrammatic method for representing the relevant relations between

philosophical practice and the world of theories and the relations and ideas contained in the latter. (Brandom 2008: 7ff.) In a diagram, Rocco Gangle follows Brandom in representing language and concepts by an oval shape – this represents saying. Capacities or practices are represented in rectangular shapes with rounded corners: they express the power of doing. One can now introduce the arrow from the rectangular instance endowed with observer capacity (for example, three given kinds of red) to the oval area containing the terms magenta, scarlet, and maroon. (Gangle 2014: 49) This arrow is called PB-sufficient (practice term) if it indicates that the relation between the two instances is such that a given set of practices (capacity for color discrimination) is sufficient to produce a correct set of terms. An arrow pointing in the opposite direction is called BP-sufficient (term-practice), insofar as the given vocabulary of terms is rich and consistent enough to express and distinguish a given set of practices. Thus, what is primarily at issue here are the relations and the systems of compositions they contain (morphism governs objects). Here the details and contents of the two instances are completely unspecified, i. e. instances are to be understood merely as indexes or designators. The relations reflect definite pragmatic and semantic modal conditions and are thus sufficient for the further use of practices and concepts.

Finally, what Brandom calls a “meaning-use diagram” applies to any particular system of instances and fields in which PB and BP sufficients and the necessary relations between them can be connected in a compellingly categorical way. For example, a BP-sufficiency relation that starts from terms B/1 and should lead to a set of practices P can be combined with a PB-sufficiency relation that in turn leads from a set of practices to further terms B/2, to finally establish a meta-conceptual relation between B/1 and B/2 – a new relation formed exclusively from the given BP- and PB-sufficiency relations, a relation that identifies B/1 as sufficiency enough to say what must be done in order for the relation of concepts B/2 to be achieved. (Ibid: 50)

Thus, one finds a set of terms and a set of practices, both of which together contain three explicit relations: 1) The B-sufficiency relation, a relation in which the terms have sufficient expressive resources to specify a given set of practices. 2) The P-sufficient relation, sufficient enough to develop a set of terms. 3) A third arrow representing the BB-sufficient relation, a relation of terms to itself that says what it does when it says what it says. (it specifies itself in its own medium). In category theory, the third relation is called the composition of the two prior mappings. The BB-suffixed relation is ultimately identical to the composition of the BP-suffixed relation and the PB-suffixed relation. (Ibid: 51)

What is of primary interest here, that is the reciprocal relation of the first two sufficient relations. The PB-sufficient relation indexes (qua hermeneutics, deductions, inductions, etc.) that it is sufficient as a set of practices for a consistent philosophical conceptual vocabulary to be developed that enables philosophical statements. The BP-sufficiency relation indexes that philosophy, by means of its conceptual acrobatics, is able to provide necessary specifications for a set of practices that is itself sufficiency for philosophy. And there is, via the composition of the relations, a meta-conceptual BB relation that leads from concepts to concepts, whatever the contents of the internal structures of the concepts may be – and these three relations taken together document for Laruelle the principle of sufficiency of philosophy, which in turn is autoreferentially applied by philosophy to philosophy. Or, to put it

another way, philosophy here adequately says what it does when it says what it says. (Ibid.: 45) It provides itself with its pragmatic metavocabulary. For Laruelle, the practical-theoretical sufficiency of Hegelianizing philosophy is evident because it produces an operative closure with respect to the active-productive and the reflexive-thematic moments of philosophical thought.

One would now have to discuss the various conceptual levels in Hegel at which this circular figure occurs in each case. And one then cannot help but suspect in the movement from An-Sich-Sein to Für-Sich-Sein and finally to An-und-Für-Sich-Sein precisely the concepts and practices that Brandom calls the “expressive-pragmatic bootstrapping” depicted here (quoted from: *ibid.*: 51). In Hegel’s dialectical concept, doing (praxis; An-sich) systematically precedes saying (theory; Für sich), and this at all levels traversed up to the limit and up to the conclusion in absolute spirit, with which the otherness of the extra-self-being object is suspended in a knowledge that is aware that it is “with itself in its otherness as such.” (Hegel 1970: 575). Hegel does not eliminate the ontic, but everything that exists is permeated by spirit, which comes to itself in absolute knowledge. Reality remains as it is, and it is taken back into philosophy through an essentially Christian reconciliation. Regardless of how one wishes to relate Brandom’s diagram to Hegel, it represents the circularly composing and composed system of categories and concepts (objects and relations) as the fundamental form of philosophy that Laruelle ultimately identifies with the digital-one divides into two-or with the fraction $1/2$, the systematic unity of a dualism of which the transcendental-empirical doublet is the prime example. 4

This critique of Hegel now constitutes a commonplace in continental philosophy. Already from the mid-20th century, a post-Hegelian and post-Kantian philosophy had formed around authors such as Badiou, Derrida, and Levinas, whose critique of the dialectic relies on concepts such as event, the finitely real, the Other, etc., that is, continues the critique by means of the stratagems of supplement or adjunction. (Cf. Gangle 2013: 51f.) These theories all operate with a structure of philosophy that Laruelle designates with the break $3/2$. The philosophy of difference continues to insist on duality, but this is interrupted and re-cemented by a supposed third term (Real, Event, Other). As distinct from the $1/2$ system of the empirical-transcendental doublet, the $3/2$ system formulates the more complex doublet of the transcendental and the real.

The closedness and symmetry of the dialectical model, which contains a two-tiered circle, contrasts somewhat with the recourse to an external third term seemingly beyond philosophical sufficiency. Laruelle nevertheless wants to use the methods of non-philosophy to show a constitutive kinship between dialectics and the philosophy of difference. One should superimpose both models so that it can be shown how both philosophy mutually fertilize and develop each other by partout not ceasing their mutual alternation. This mediating function is carried out in current continental philosophy by means of the figure of thought of the open chiasmus. For Jean Luc Nancy and Catherine Malabou, one completely misinterprets absolute knowledge in Hegel if one does not simultaneously think closure as openness to difference. In Alan Badiou or Jacques Derrida, in turn, however different their philosophical conceptions, we find a second-order philosophical sufficiency, an undecidable oscillation between auto-sufficiency and hetero-sufficiency.

The problem of meta-difference, the difference of differences, will be presented here only very briefly. (Cf. for the following Gangle 2013: 35f.) Given two terms A and B representing concepts, objects, etc., the difference itself (between A and B) is represented by A/B. The structure of metadifference now indicates the following: The difference in itself between the two terms (the complex term A/B) is distinguished from one of the two terms (A) (which it already includes) and it is identified with the other term (B). For the term B in the relation one substitutes the whole expression A/B, so that the difference (A/B) is distinguished from the term A. The result can then be written down as follows: A/(A/B). Here the term B remains relatively unanalyzed, or to put it differently, the process remains undecidable and leads to the bad infinity of $A-B = A/(A/(A/B))$. We are faced with the problem of self-inclusion, that is, a unilateral doubling of the difference which is itself one of the terms. (Ibid.)

Difference thus takes itself as its object and at the same time transcends its own objectification. This can be inscribed not only as meta-difference, but also as meta-relation: A-B. So what happens when one of the terms of the relation is the relation itself? One takes the relation A-B for the term B, substitutes B with it and gets the expression: A-(A-B). But what happens if now also the fixed term A iterates? Then we obtain not only $A=A/B$, but also $B=A/B$ ($A \neq B$). (Ibid.) We are obviously in a conflict here insofar as each of the two terms is the difference and the conflict itself. And nothing else represents the figure of thought of chiasmus. Ultimately, this means that the philosophy of difference cannot bear a real non-relationship. On the one hand, in the philosophy of difference there is the tendency to maximize differences (Nietzsche), insofar as difference promises a superiority that can be driven to infinity; on the other hand, difference can also remain relatively obscure in order to lead to a primordial ground, which in the case of tautology is (the nothingness niches). With Nietzsche it can be claimed that the properties of a thing are only effects for other things. If one now eliminates the term "other thing", then a thing has no more properties at all, and the conclusion from this is that there is definitely no thing without other things, i. e. the relations absolutely dominate. Or in other words, thinghood dissolves into the stream of differential events. In the case of instead, the objective particularity of the relations must be thought as dependent on the real, on a non-objective transcendence that separates each relation into two formally distinct sides, one side assigned to the disconcealment and concealment of the being of the being, and the other side assigned to the object that is indifferent to the other side. poses with respect to the second aspect the question of irreversibility as such. At this point, for the Kantian "thing-in-itself" is an essential and tautological subtraction in itself (the essence of being). Derrida, on the other hand, according to Laruelle, performs a complex mixture or chiasmus of the Nietzschean and Ianian models: He formulates the meta-difference of the two models. Difference, Laruelle's summary critique argues, is a philosophical syntax sui generis and a reality or an experience of the real (cf. Laruelle 2010a: 2), and thus a principle to be valued real rather than formal and transcendental rather than logical. Difference, in representational mode, articulates a mixture as such by demanding the "neither...nor," and at the same time a kind of inclusive disjunction by which the "neither...nor" is so minimally negative as to produce indivisibility as one (nothingness as being).⁵

For Laruelle, both dialectics and difference philosophy, both of which can be represented by diagrams, are correlative tendencies that are always present in philosophy and weighted differently according to need and situation. It is the undecidable conjunction/disjunction of

the two doublets themselves-transcendental-empirical or transcendental-real-that characterizes philosophy at its most general level. Thus, philosophy is wether wholly sufficiency nor wholly insufficiency, but it perpetually animates its own semi-system of sufficiency/insufficiency, which presupposes and repeats itself by simultaneously critiquing and sustaining undecidability. For Laruelle, this instability follows from the warring nature of philosophy.

1 In the history of philosophy, the real has been discussed a) as independence and b) as authenticity. It is independent whether or not someone perceives it, thinks about it, or translates it into language related to a referent. This refers to the a priori transcendence of the real with respect to any ideality, a relative transcendence that Laruelle designates as the distinction between philosophical syntax and reality that remains attractive today. Authenticity, on the other hand, allows for certain gradations of reality because the real can now be an existent more or less according to its essence, i. e. the essence itself is still gradual. Authenticity and independence are always understood in philosophy as qualification of what exists.

2 The oraxiom (conflation of axiom and oracle) indicates the superposition of the mathematical axiom and the non-philosophical decision. The “axioms” of non-philosophy or generic science, and DLI in particular, conjugate two types of decision – the mathematical, to establish a formal field structure, and the non-philosophical, i.e. the undecidable decision. The oraxiom is radically immanent. Other nuances of the oraxiom such as cryptic, enigmatic, the abyssal or the groundless, the delirious, etc. belong to philo-fiction and should be transformed according to the same conditions. Future is what is demanded and performed par excellence qua oraxiom.

3 Axioms and theorems constitute the main elements of Laruelle’s method, cf. Laruelle 2012: 45ff.

4 What is given is divided, which is Hegel’s true principle. In a sense, Hegel uses both the digital (the One divided into Two) and the analog (Two synthesized in the One) as elements of his dialectic: the moment of analysis, in which the One is divided into Two, and the moment of synthesis, in which the Two are combined in the One. With synthesis, Hegel finally wants to overcome alienation. There are contradictions, but they must still be reintegrated into the great whole, the absolute spirit.

5 Laruelle thinks against these different forms of difference the One, but possibly ends himself again, so reads a criticism, to introduce a fundamental logic, and thus he only repeats the problems he just criticizes. The non-concept of “chora” may be an interface between Derrida and Laruelle. While for the former it is the last name of what is not, *différance*, for the latter it is the first name of what is axiomatically uttered.

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